THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Under the Ministry of Defence, only Defence Research and Development Organization, and Border Road Development Board are exempted from the purview of the Right to Information Act 2005. However, information pertaining to the allegations of corruption and human rights violations are not exempted.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

CAG report on inflated figure of sales by BEML

1419. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the C&AG in his recent report on the working of BEML (Bharat Earth Movers Ltd.) has stated that the company has inflated its sales by Rs. 894 crore; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter and the action taken/proposed to be taken in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) BEML has been advised to ensure that sales are booked appropriately and also have a re-look at its sale accounting policy.

Shortfall in intake of officers in armed forces

1420. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there have been shortfall in the intake of officers in the armed forces of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has studied the reasons for this shortfall in the intake of officers;

(d) if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to attract the talented youth in the armed forces of the nation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) There have been shortfalls in the intake of officers in the Armed Forces for a variety of reasons which include availability of employment opportunities in other sectors, tough selection procedures, difficult service conditions coupled with perceived high degree of risk involved in service career.

A number of steps have been taken to attract the talented youth to join the Armed Forces. All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) are now eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain , Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively.

The tenure of Short Service Commission (SSC) Officers has been increased from 10 years to 14 years. A total number of 750 posts of Lt. Colonel have been upgraded to Colonel towards implementation of AV Singh Committee Report (Phase-I). Further, 1896 additional posts in the ranks of Colonel, Brigadier, Major General and Lieutenant General and their equivalent in the other two Services have been upgraded towards implementation of AV Singh Committee Report (Phase-II). The implementation of recommendations of the VI Central Pay Commission with substantial improvements in the pay structure of officers of Armed Forces, will also go a long way in making the Services more attractive.

The Armed Forces have also undertaken sustained image projection and publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, motivational lectures in school, colleges are also some of the other measures in this direction.

Sell of personal weapons in the gray market by Army personnel

1421. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Army officers have been selling their personal weapons (non-service pattern) illegally in the gray market with help of a cartel of ammunition dealers in two border districts of Rajasthan. Bikaner and Sriganganagar;

(b) whether district administration has identified 30 army officers, including two Major General and 2 Brigadiers, allegedly connected with this trade;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken against those found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) A Court of Inquiry was held to enquire into the circumstances under which some serving/retired army personnel had sold/purchased/disposed off firearms and ammunition of various calibers.

(b) and (c) The District Collector, Sriganganagar had provided a list of officers who sold their non-service pattern (NSP) weapons which included two Major Generals and two Brigadiers. The Court of Inquiry however did not find them involved/blameworthy in the matter.

(d) Following actions have been taken against the persons found blameworthy;

(i) 25 officers who were in possession of more rounds of ammunition than authorised for their NSP weapons have been censured;

(ii) Administrative action/disciplinary action has been initiated against 41 army officers, one junior commissioned officer and 04 retired officers for selling NSP weapons in violation of the extant provisions along with notices for depositing their weapons back with COD Jabalpur.